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# disques

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# disques

## FOR SEPTEMBER 1932

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RICHARD J. MAGRUDER, EDITOR

EDWARD C. SMITH, ART EDITOR





# disques

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THOSE who have followed the course of phonographic activities during the most important period of the record industry—unquestionably the five or six years since the electrical process of recording revolutionized mechanical music—must surely be impressed by the remarkable changes that have taken place in the phonograph world. Surveying present conditions and comparing them with those that pertained some years ago, one is pretty certain to observe a number of important differences. These changes, moreover, cannot be blamed solely upon economic conditions, though they naturally have affected the progress of the phonograph industry just as they have affected the progress of nearly every other modern industry. But a great many of the more important of these alterations would have occurred even if there had been no depression and there were still two cars in every garage and a chicken in every pot, as they tell us there were only a couple of years ago.

These changes, like the majority of changes in a world that moves forward with exasperating sluggishness, have come upon us slowly, gradually, almost imperceptibly. Coming thus, they have settled upon us without our fully realizing the fact. But when memory fails or grows befuddled, a glance through some of the early issues of the older phonograph magazines — the *Gramophone* and the

*Phonograph Monthly Review*, which were fortunate enough to be in existence when electrical recording first appeared—will easily carry one back to those early days and make one vividly conscious of the differences between the phonograph industry today and that of yesterday. A glance at some of the 1926 or 1927 record catalogues and supplements of the various companies will perform a similar service with equal effectiveness.



Looking back at the early days of electrical recording, one is pretty certain to experience a slight feeling of melancholy, a sneaking suspicion that the old days were the best, a nostalgic and wholly illogical desire for the return of a charming period during which for a few all too brief months one flapped one's wings without restraint and moved about in a thrilling world where almost anything seemed possible. Seen in retrospect, those early days indubitably appear strangely lovely. They had a feverish charm, a gusto, and a delirious excitement that are almost entirely absent today; one was nearly always in a constant and altogether unreasonable state of suspense, eagerly looking forward to the contents of the next month's supplements, anxiously speculating on when a recording of the *Eroica* or the Brahms First would appear.



For in all probability, one had already heard the current month's issues innumerable times and maybe already even owned them, and so was impatiently awaiting something new. In those days record collecting was not so expensive as it is now. One had the money, but there was not much to spend it on. Record prices were pretty much the same as they are today, but there were fewer records, and in consequence there were not so many temptations calculated to seduce the collector. Neither the domestic companies nor their foreign affiliations had yet gotten in their stride, and the importers, dealing largely with the records issued by the European companies, had yet to appear in any number. It did not then, as it does now and has done for a long while, take an extraordinarily wealthy person to keep up with the monthly releases. A person with a moderate income could easily purchase almost every record he wanted without making undue sacrifices. Moreover, he could bask comfortably in the dazzling knowledge that he could repeat the same exhilarating performance the following month and maybe the next one, too.



The lists of records issued by the various companies were relatively thin during the first few months of the electrical process, and they were not over-burdened with worthwhile records, though naturally at the time they seemed eminently worthwhile and marvellously recorded. The radio was then only a crude toy, not noticeably superior to the acoustical records and phonographs, and it had yet to exert sufficiently strong an appeal to worm its way into practically every American home, as it has in more recent years. The Orthophonic process, thus unhampered by radio competition and being something entirely new and different, received widespread attention and gripped the imagination of the public, creating a demand for the new machines and records much larger than could be supplied at once.

Everyone recalls the tremendous demand for the first Orthophonic phonographs—a demand so heavy, indeed, that the factories were swamped with orders and many people had to wait a month or so until the manufacturers could catch up with the huge demand. It would be difficult to imagine a delay caused by a similar reason today.

The records, then, were issued slowly, a few at a time, and one's shelf of albums—it was really only a remote corner of a shelf—grew only a couple of inches every few months. There was then no urgent problem of record storage, unless one had gone in for acoustical records and had accumulated a sizeable collection of them. In all likelihood the space in the cabinet of the collector's phonograph was sufficient to hold his first year's purchases. Little choice or discrimination was exercised by the overly enthusiastic record buyer in those days; he bought what was issued—the Beethoven Fifth and the *Poet and Peasant*, the *Pathétique* and the *Marche Slav*—and listened to them with equal delight, noting with ecstasy the muddy rumble that passed for the bass, the thunderous roar that was the kettle-drums, never before heard from records.



Needless to say, this pleasant condition did not last long, nor did the record-buying public want it to. Bowled over by the realism of the reproduction obtained from the new records and machines and exhilarated by the knowledge that they

could now listen to a recording of a favorite symphony that bore a passably recognizable resemblance to that same symphony heard in the hall, they enthusiastically clamored for more and more recordings. Ignorant of the trials and heartaches in store for them when they would be confronted with these ardently desired recordings for which they would not—many of them—have the price, they deluged the phonograph companies with suggestions, filled the correspondence columns of the phonograph magazines with long, earnest letters about records, artists, needles, devices intended to make for better reproduction, and passionate demands for recordings of this or that composition, or, in the majority of cases, for both compositions. Loaded down with the month's releases, they left their dealer's shop with a gleam in the eye and a parting reminder to be sure and let them know when the next advance lists arrived.

In those days there were not so many demands for Strawinski, Schönberg, Ravel and the other moderns. The composers most popular in the concert hall and opera house—Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schumann, Schubert, Chopin, Wagner, Tschaiowsky, Rimsky-Korsakow, Verdi, Puccini—enjoyed (and, for that matter, still do) a similar popularity among collectors, and so they were the names most conspicuous on record labels.

Naturally, the phonograph companies, sensing the rapidly growing market for more and better recorded music, did not let the demand pass unheeded. The supplements grew fatter, more abundant, more alluring. Whereas they formerly listed but one album at most a month, they now sometimes issued as many as three. Additional supplements, listing records that could not conveniently be included in the regular monthly supplements, appeared periodically, all containing attractive items. It began to be a serious problem to get everything one wanted, and only the more well heeled could solve it satisfactorily.



More and more domestic recordings of good music were issued. The Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, Chicago and New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestras began to appear in albums and on single records. Wagnerian sets, stemming from Bayreuth, London and Berlin, were released. Complete Italian operas recorded in Italy were repressed, and dozens of other longer works recorded in Europe were issued by the domestic companies. Soon it became evident that one could not have everything he wanted, that he would have to make some sort of a selection, taking only those things that appealed most strongly and passing over anything about which there could be the slightest doubt.

But the demand for more recordings never slackened, and suggestions were as numerous as ever. Seeing that many of their earlier requests had been adopted, collectors were encouraged and their vanity pleased. They racked their heads and scoured the dictionaries for further compositions that would go well on records, sent in their suggestions, and in most cases the suggestions were carried out.

The steadily mounting phonograph repertoire acquired formidable size, dignity and almost unbelievable variety. In the early days of electrical recording it was rather a surprising thing to see a symphonic program that contained more than one work that had been electrically recorded. Indeed, it was not uncommon for



them to contain not a single one. Today, on the other hand, the vast majority of symphonic programs can easily be duplicated on the phonograph, unmistakable indication that the standard repertoire has been pretty thoroughly combed by the recording companies (and this does not take into consideration the smaller but surely no less interesting list of modern works—many of them difficult to hear elsewhere—that have somehow or other found their way into the record catalogues).



Now, as everybody knows, things are considerably different. The various catalogues fairly bulge with desirable things. If a month arrives with no interesting new records, that is not the disaster it once was, for the collector can always find something worthwhile among the previously issued records. Whereas in former years the mere announcement of an album containing a complete symphony, concerto, opera or piece of chamber music was more than enough to throw the whole phonograph world into a fever of pleasurable excitement, a similar announcement today causes only a mild ripple of interest. The majority of collectors have become, if not actually surfeited, at least comfortably full. There is still, of course, plenty—in fact, more than ever—to sustain the collector's interest, but the first glow and wild pleasure of unexpected and thrilling discoveries has disappeared, perhaps forever. The collector does not so quickly and impulsively lose his head; accustomed now to good reproduction, he tends to be more critical and difficult to satisfy; it takes more than an attractive album to throw him off his balance. Even a complete recording of Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*—unthinkable four or five years ago—now only mildly astonishes him.

It is encouraging to hear that in spite of the depression the demand for records has continued, as a correspondent, an official of one of the companies, pointed out in last month's *Disques*. The record industry has grown up and is now securely established. It is evident that fortunes are not going to be made overnight in it, but it is equally apparent that it is a far better and sounder kind of business than any in which a fortune can be made overnight. It is one that has clearly demonstrated that it has a necessary and important place in modern life, and it is a place that is constantly acquiring more dignity and value.

For the record business is now based on a sound and enduring foundation: man's love for music. The feverish excitement that attended the launching of the electrical process of recording was a natural enough phenomenon at that time, but it was inevitable, depression or no depression, that it couldn't continue. It was caused by the sheer novelty of the new records and machines; many who were momentarily flooded by this novelty, who were fascinated by the mechanical details of the new machines, were not genuine music lovers. The music played only a secondary part in their interest in the phonograph. They were interested primarily in a new toy, and in a toy, moreover, that made pleasing, if not exactly important, sounds. Naturally, their interest waned as it became increasingly apparent that to continue with the hobby would involve the expenditure of rather considerable sums of money. So they relegated the phonograph to the attic, and perhaps can now be found tinkering with the dials of a radio or engaged in similarly entertaining activities.



The genuine music lovers remained, and their ranks were considerably augmented by others who had not previously been interested in the phonograph. So that in place of the engaging novelty that the phonograph companies had principally to offer some years ago, they now offer us a wide choice of excellent music, competently played and soundly recorded. Whatever regret one may feel for the passing of that early excitement is more than made up for by the far more permanent and enduring attractions of the many magnificent albums that now grace the shelves of the record dealers.



In almost every respect, then, the recording companies are in a much better position than they were when electrical reproduction first came in. Recording has now been developed to an astonishing degree of perfection, and it is constantly improving. Reproducing machines as yet, unfortunately, are not equally as good, nor have they ever been, but there are enough good ones around to lead one to hope that some day soon an adequate machine, inexpensively priced, will be available. Nothing is more pressing needed than a good phonograph unburdened with radio, automatic record-changing devices and other details that have little or no appeal to the record collector, who is interested principally in obtaining fine reproduction.

In one respect, however, the manufacturers have a more serious problem to deal with than formerly. When electrical recording was inaugurated, the recorders had the whole field of music before them to put on records. Much of this field has now been covered. There is still plenty to be recorded, of course, but the problem of finding suitable recording material has been more intensified in recent years, since most of the accepted masterpieces from which a lively sale could confidently be expected are already available in one, two, three or maybe even four versions.

It is obvious, therefore, that from now on the music that will be put on records will not be so familiar as that in the past, and those who genuinely love the masterpieces of music but who nevertheless are not content with them alone cannot help but rejoice. There is too strong a tendency on the part of many music lovers—record collectors and concert-goers alike—to limit music to a few unquestioned masterpieces, and the manufacturers, like orchestra conductors and opera impresarios, have not been unaware of the fact. The consequence of this is that many fine pieces of music have been spoiled by injudicious and too frequent repetition.

In the future a great deal of new and interesting music, good and bad, is pretty certain to be recorded, if for no other reason than that there will be nothing left to record. The events of the past few months clearly show which way the wind is blowing. The RCA Victor Company, after an extended lull in recording activities, recently resumed recording work, and already five sets of comparatively unfamiliar music have been issued, and more are in preparation.



Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, Grofé's *Grand Canyon*, Skryabin's *Prometheus* and *Poem of Ecstasy*, and Carpenter's *Skyscrapers* and *Song of Faith* are an oddly

mixed group of compositions, of widely differing character and merit, but they do have one thing in common: to the vast majority of listeners they are new and unfamiliar. That five such works should be released in the space of a few months and during a serious economic crisis cannot help but encourage those interested in recorded music. Quite apart from the fact that they make welcome additions to the phonograph repertoire, it is heartening to reflect that a recording company has sufficient faith in the record business to undertake so formidable and expensive a task as the recording of these works must have involved.

In Europe the lists have not contained a great deal this year. They have often been far slimmer than the American lists; indeed, there have been months during the past year when not a single album set was issued in England, where the phonograph is probably more generously supported than anywhere else. But the founding of such societies as the Hugo Wolf Society, the Beethoven Piano Sonata Society, the Haydn Quartet Society, and now the Sibelius Society is surely not without significance, and makes up in part for the absence of interesting records on the regular lists. These societies, after a rather poor start, have since become fairly popular—at least one may surmise that to be the fact, since the first records of one society are no sooner issued than another society, devoted to the works of another composer, is announced. These societies also provide a scrap of comfort for those who object to the high prices of records. Limited editions of books invariably are vastly more expensive than regular editions; the prices of the society records, which correspond to limited editions of books, are no higher than they would be if they were issued on the regular lists in the normal way. The only difference is that one's time to buy the records is also limited, and that, in these days, is bound to cause many to forego the pleasure of owning these albums.

Admitting that the record industry is not in as flourishing a condition as one would like to see it, is it actually worse off than any other industry? Indeed, is it too much to believe that the record industry has a really magnificent future before it once economic conditions are straightened out? Optimism is a luxury

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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#### CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotopia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.



# Aaron Copland

By ISAAC GOLDBERG

I have a vivid recollection of Mr. Aaron Copland in his studio on West 58th Street, New York City, a few weeks before the opening of the brief music festival at Yaddo, near Saratoga Springs, New York, this past May. I had called to hear him play his new Piano Variations. I hadn't seen him for about five years, when Boston had heard his Piano Concerto—the composer at the keyboard—and had showered him with bushels of metaphorical vegetables. He was a brave boy then; he is a brave young man today. Despite the occasionally hysterical clangor of the Concerto, there was, for the listening ear to discern, a certain austerity at the core of this dissonant music. Some of us thought we heard it, and far from throwing unripe fruit and equally unripe verbiage, we marked him down as one of the few American composers whose progress we should follow.



I thought of this almost paradoxical austerity when I walked into his monastic cell. For that, despite its light and air and spaciousness, is how the studio impressed one visitor on his first call. A few shelves, not overburdened with books, but these well-chosen. . . . A wide, but chaste, low bed, which you turned into an ample sofa by the simple process of sitting down upon it in full daylight. . . . A long, narrow table, spread over with drying sheets of an orchestral score . . . A grand piano in the dark corner . . . And a telephone that every other moment invaded the cell with its modernist importunities.

There is something of this selfsame austerity about Copland's person and his playing. I should judge, from our infrequent meetings, and from something in his music, even at its loudest, that the young man is considerably self-contained,—that he does not give himself easily,—that inside of him, too, is a cell within his outer cell that shields him from the harshness of unwelcome contact. His face, like his manner, suggests intensity and inner preoccupation; or, in the present cant of the psychological profession, marked introversion. At the piano, eyes half-closed and surely looking inward, he seems to abstract himself from the materiality of the place. Such concentration is itself a passion of strength.

His face has, to persist with our monkish language, a sort of delicately illumined pallor that makes a half-mystery of his gray-blue eyes. He smiles often, but as if into a concealed mirror. He has an excellent sense of what he means to do, and a radiant indifference to hostile criticism. Perhaps even to favorable criticism, for what he does is done under what one might term an æsthetic compulsion. I trust that I am not suggesting a fanaticism that is not present; but the drive, the unquestioning courage of fanaticism are there.

In the Piano Variations even the starkness is there. It is hardly a music to be grasped at a single hearing, despite its very short duration. The harmonic scheme, economic though it be, is tight-packed with power. Rhythmically, there is the same economy, but with a somewhat clearer progress. The structure is fairly atomic;

by this I mean that it is in its way a masterpiece of concentration, far richer in content and in quality than its external bareness would seem to suggest. Here, in the compass of some ten minutes, without the advantage of orchestral timbres and combinations, one conceives what a wealth may dwell in the relationships of undifferentiated tones. There is a nobility of simple, essential speech, as in the mythology that opens the Old Testament. This, in sound, is a veritable self-portrait: the high forehead; the long, uneven nose; the deep-set eyes with their white fire; the plastic lips; the intellectual asceticism.

## II

Outwardly, then, the Piano Variations are at the opposite pole from the *Symphonic Ode* that Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra disclosed for the first time at their Symphony Hall, on February 19 and 20 of this year, later carrying the composition to New York. For this, the latest of Copland's orchestral works—originally it had been commissioned by Koussevitzky as one of the pieces meant to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the orchestra, but arrived too late for performance in 1931—is built on a generous plan, in expansive moods, one movement about twenty-five minutes long. Dedicated, naturally, to Sergei Koussevitzky, it is scored for piccolo, three flutes (the third interchangeable with piccolo), three oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, two clarinets in B-flat, bass clarinet, three bassoons, double-bassoon, eight horns, five trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, kettledrums, bass drum, side drum, cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, wood block, glockenspiel, slap stick, two harps, and the strings.

For the program-book of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Copland provided the following note:

The *Symphonic Ode* was composed at intervals from August, 1927, to September, 1929, in a number of countries and places: Königstein, Germany; Santa Fé, N. M.; Peterboro, N. H. (MacDowell Colony); Briarcliff Manor, N. Y.; Juziers, France, and New York City. The orchestration was completed from July to November, 1929 . . .

The title *Symphonic Ode* is not meant to imply any connection with a literary idea. It is not an Ode to anything other than the particular spirit to be found in the music itself. In another connection, André Gide has well expressed my meaning: "Before explaining my book to others, I wait for them to explain it to me. To wish to explain it first would be to restrain its meaning prematurely, because even if we know what we wish to say we cannot know if we have said *only* that. And what interests me especially is what I have put into my book without my knowledge—that part of the unconscious that I should like to name *la part de Dieu*."

The musical origin of the *Ode* is a two-measure phrase to be found in my *Nocturne* for violin and piano (1926). This phrase, stated in the violin piece without development, seemed rich in possibilities for expansion. In various guises it forms the principal thematic material for the *Ode*. As a whole, the work is cast in five-sectional form, which can roughly be represented as A-B-C-B-D. The massive opening section (A) gradually acquires momentum and breaks up into the "feathery brightness" of the Allegro (B), which is followed by (C) a more lyrical treatment of the first section's material. The repetition of the Allegro section (B) is only approximate. It moves imperceptibly into Section D, which combines A and B to form a Coda in the monumental mood of the opening.

Words instead of music are scant fare; one may as well try to still hunger with food painted on canvas . . . Copland's *Ode* was received by the generality of Bostonian listeners even as his Organ Symphony had been greeted in February,



1925, with Nadia Boulanger (one of his teachers) at the organ; as his *Music for the Theatre*, nine months later; his *Concerto*, late in January, 1927; his *Two Pieces for String Orchestra*, in the middle of December, 1928.

### III

It is easy to dismiss the *Ode*, as most of the hearers did, with talk of impossible dissonance, hysterical abandon, melodic sterility, and, in general, of modernist wilfulness. What is not easy is to observe the starkness and the austerity behind this passion of brass and brooding. If it were not a word that one has come to dislike for its almost indis severable connotations, I should call this a predominantly "religious" music,—a quasi-mystical ecstasy in tone and timbre. There are light, but never gracile, moments in the *Ode*; Copland once foreswore jazz, but jazz has not, even yet, fore sworn him. This jazzy reminiscence blends strangely with a certain musical Hebraism,—piercing trumpets as if blown from the precincts of the Temple; a monumentalism of structure achieved not only with massed choirs but in melodic strides suggestive of seven-league boots; music of prophecy, of invective, of the soul's apocalypse. I speak of "musical Hebraism" and then, mentally, cancel the phrase, except for its convenient metaphoric service. Jews have written in all the styles; I am as dubious of race in music as of race in life.

Call it by what name you will; the general impression of the *Ode* upon ears attuned to it is one of an ascetic grandeur. What it sounded like to unprepared listeners may be gathered from this excerpt out of a letter sent, by an indignant subscriber, to a Boston newspaper after the concert. "It is not," quotes the lady from Copland's notes, "an *Ode* to anything other than the particular spirit to be found in the music itself . . . I think I can tell Mr. Copland what that particular spirit in his music is. It is the spirit which rules the place which is said to be extremely warm . . . I heard the Copland *Symphonic Ode* and I could sympathize with the woman who said, 'And so this is hell!'" Corridor comment supported this facile interpretation.

Let us leave that comment in the corridor . . . For us, the *Symphonic Ode* is one of the outstanding orchestral compositions of our day, unparalleled in American music except by the symphonic vaticinations of Ernest Bloch. And not the Bloch of the *America* Symphony; rather he of *Schelomo*, piece for violoncello and orchestra in which is a like brooding, though not, if we recall aright, accomplished with a like economy; rather even the Bloch of the *Concerto Grosso*. American music . . . Hebrew music . . . mere terms. The *Ode* is, when all is played and done, Copland music. It is, to use a Schopenhauerism, the world as Copland's musical representation.

### IV

Copland is in his thirty-second year. He is a native of Brooklyn, like his friend and senior by some two years, George Gershwin. He began the study of music when thirteen, and in this country his teachers were Victor Wittgenstein and Clarence Adler for the piano, and Rubin Goldmark for harmony and composition. In 1921 he went to Paris, there studying composition and the piano under Nadia Boulanger. Three years later he returned to New York, but for a brief stay, as he was awarded, for two years in succession (1925-1927), a John Simon Guggen-

heim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. This enabled him to continue composition and study abroad.

Mr. Copland is not the composer who is engrossed in his labors to the exclusion of all other considerations. A fellow of independent temper, he is felicitous in verbal as well as tonal expression. His speech at Yaddo about the indifference of American musical critics to the strivings of the newer, fresher composers, stirred some useful discussion in the press. It brought him forward as spokesman for a cause that is, so far as widespread interest is concerned, lost at the very start. This stuff was not made for popularity.

Two years ago Mr. Copland was awarded \$5,000 in a Victor Prize Contest. What has become of the phonograph records that were expected to be issued?

Which brings us to a related matter. . . . It has always been a source of surprise to me that no organization existed, in the field of the phonograph, comparable to the Little Theatre, let us say, or to the Chamber Orchestra,—an organization whose function it would be to issue, to an underwriting group of subscribers, musical works that in their very nature cannot hope to find a profitable public among the regular purchasers of records. If any type of music asks the benefit of repeated hearing, certainly it is the sort that the more adventurous Americans are writing today. Much of it is music for piano or for small instrumental combinations; it should not require too great an outlay to have it prepared for recording and for distribution among an interested clientèle.

To my impractical nature it seems that the modern composer has too long been asleep to the vast potentialities of the phonograph as a natural medium of publication, and even as a medium to be written for directly. The money that has been raised, with great effort, sacrifice and difficulty, to give a single unprofitable concert of the new music could be the means of spreading, by phonographic transcription, a knowledge of that selfsame music, ready for endless repetition, among an audience far greater than that which assembles for such a concert. In any case, it is a venture well worth trying. Already, for songs and singers, and for certain cycles of piano music—perhaps orchestral, too—we have had forecasts of such a modernist organization.

It was to be expected that Copland, like Henry Cowell when I mentioned the same subject to him during one of our conversations in New York, would be very much interested in the idea. The period, to be sure, is hardly favorable to such a venture; but music endures beyond depressions, and the spade work could be done even now, so that by the time we got out of this slough of financial despond the foundations would be laid.

Recording a vast structure like Copland's *Symphonic Ode*, of course, demands a great symphony orchestra. Questions of contract, expense and policy enter into the possibility of arranging, during a regular performance of such a work, to have a recording made for a special group of subscribers. It is a pity that such arrangements cannot be made, for our phonographic repertory is in need of a left-wing catalogue. Familiarity breeds not always contempt; it may breed understanding, too. As much as it needs new modernist music, America—or that portion of it which keeps musically alive—needs also the opportunity for frequent hearing of



what we already have. Even the composers need the opportunity of re-hearing, for the unplayed composer is far worse off than the unexhibited painter. The painter can always see what he has done; study it, show it to qualified appreciators. We unappreciated geniuses of literature have always the printed page of our unbought masterpieces to re-read in the light of gathered experience. The composer of an orchestral work has only his score to look at, or his piano version to console him.

When will Mr. Copland and/or Mr. Cowell, for example, start this ball a-rolling?



# All Quiet On the Western Jazz Front

By R. D. DARRELL

With the Jazz Decade taken into the arms of history, the saga of its exploits—nostalgic now, incredibly distant—chronicled in *Only Yesterday* and *The Great American Band Wagon*, one ponders curiously on the fate of the species of music that gave name and index to those frantic years. Seemingly the nuptial rites between Euterpe and Jazz, celebrated by pontiffs Whiteman and Damrosch, hymned by Gilbert Seldes, succeeded only too well in making an honest woman of the black (or at least octaroon) sheep. The ex-king of jazz, like every abdicated or dethroned monarch of prize ring or state, has written his memoirs for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Pretenders to the throne—Lombardo, Reisman, and their kind—dispense a polite dance music denatured of all shock and novelty. Zanies like Ted Lewis and Ben Bernie go in for vaudeville entertainment in which jazz plays a negligible part. Gershwin moves steadily symphony- and Sullivan-ward, while Berlin, Kern, and other leading tunesters seek no further than to repeat past triumphs. Calm has fallen on a press once deliriously occupied with a tonal flea in its ear. Since Seldes' 1923 epithalamium in the *Dial* critical examination of jazz has been barren of substance except for the penetrating technical analyses of Aaron Copland and the lively Gershwinian studies of Isaac Goldberg. A national musical holiday has become safe and sane.

But *pace* Seldes, "Toujours Jazz!" The King is dead, but there is a distant cry of "Long live the King!" A static jazz would be a contradiction in terms. And indeed only one member of the family has been received into the bosom of respectability, exchanged its birthright for pottage. Within the musical city limits one hears only the faint hiss and pop of dud fire-crackers, but giant cannon-crackers are still bootlegged. The jazz battle still rages, but the scene of campaign has shifted to an Eastern front. British and Continental critics are intoxicated, outraged, set by the ears by a later jazz known variously as "hot," "new- or rhythm-style." And the fuel for their dithyrambs and imprecations originated under the very eyes of the Americans too busy tracing the falling rocket flight of Whiteman or the rising Big Bertha trajectory of Gershwin to note, much less examine, the origin and complex growth of the only jazz today entitled to the name.

## II

Existing in the flesh in the later hours of various Harlem and Chicago night clubs and the rougher dance halls, hot jazz is less the concern of the public than of professional jazz musicians and a small but passionate amateur group of connoisseurs. The latter are perhaps the queerest of all musical rare birds. Mostly school or college boys, they hold a stage door Johnny reverence for their hot gods, talk for hours in a semi-technical, nearly unintelligible lingo, memorize tricky choruses, listen to their pet records with bodies twitching, their eyes glazed in a stupefied bliss. As evangelists of the new jazz gospel their enthusiasm is largely negated by their obviously maudlin state of intoxication.

But while hot jazz may be heard occasionally in public, on the air, or by entrée into the sacred circles, it is heard best and at its best in the hands of small, highly



specialized orchestras assembled particularly for recording. Their discs, commanding a relatively small audience here (although those of the foremost exponent of hot jazz—Louis Armstrong—sold over 100,000 last year without the aid of ballyhoo or high pressure distribution), are exported in tremendous quantities to meet the lively European vogue. Abroad, detailed analytical leaflets are issued with each disc, much as annotations are issued with albums of classical works here. Several magazines are devoted to their study, led by the Belgian *Music* and the British *Rhythm* and *Melody Maker*. Even the staid pages of the *Gramophone* give considerable space to the exuberant reviews of the mercurial Edgar Jackson. The critical advocates of hot jazz number such eminences as Constant Lambert, Pierre MacOrlan, Henri Prunières, and Émile Vuillermoz.

One of the most stimulating and best informed proponents of hot jazz, Robert Goffin, has recently collected and expanded his articles from *Music* in book form.\* His bulky volume, tracing briefly the evolution of jazz and containing a delightful reminiscent chapter on the introduction of the lively art into Europe, is dedicated principally to the new jazz as and how she is played today. Goffin gives whole sections to the "Découverte du Hot," "Le Jazz Straight et Hot," "Nuits de Jazz à Harlem," and he summarizes (as minutely as a Beethoven biographer) the various "periods" of "Les Grands As du Jazz." The amazed American reader finds that this Belgian knows not only the current personnel of each hot jazz band, but the various shifts in personnel during the last five years or so. Paul Whiteman and Jack Hylton are dismissed with contempt. The well-known names of Tin Pan Alley are mentioned only cursorily. But the supermen of *Ur-Jazz*, a new and unfamiliar generation to most of us, receive page after page of attentive critical study and acclaim. The French edition of this remarkable book has gone into a second edition within a month or two of publication and already is being translated into several other languages. Compared with it our native literature of jazz by Whiteman, Osgood, *et al.*, is ancient history.

### III

In the early '20's while polite jazz—offspring of a Semetic-Negroid miscegnation—was storming into the limelight, hot jazz was finding first voice, raucous and uncertain then, in the anonymous accompaniments for such blues singers as the Smith sisters and others, in the piano playing of Jimmie Johnson (one of the few fathers of hot jazz to escape Goffin's attention), and in the orchestras of King Oliver, Clarence Williams, Fletcher Henderson, Jelly-Roll Morton, and others—all Negroes. The players were incited to "get hot," and the torrid style that developed was spoken of (with a keenly accurate sense of terminology) as "playing dirty." Noisy, abandoned, frantic, this jazz had much the same impact as the Dionysiac frenzy of an old time camp meeting in full swing. But underneath the chaotic clamor there were a diabolical improvisatory freedom and riotous rowdy polyphony. Even a touch of subtlety and more conscious ingenuity was to be found in the two clarinet or Jimmy Johnson's piano accompaniments for blues singers. Alert observers were quick to discern that here was a quickening life blood in the jazz whose Whitemanic triumphs revealed already the germs of death and decay.

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\* *AUX FRONTIÈRES DU JAZZ*. By Robert Goffin. Preface by the "grand critique français" Pierre MacOrlan. Paris, Editions du Sagittaire. 1932. 270 pages, 60 illustrations. 20 francs.

White jazzists, few in number but equipped with a surprising virtuosity, cleansed dirty jazz, transformed it into hot, brought order into its chaos without losing its priceless spontaneity, capitalized the haphazard rhythmical and contrapuntal innovations of the Negroes, organized the material more tightly and forcefully, founded the new jazz school.

The new era was ushered in by such bands as the Georgians, New Orleans Rhythm Kings, Cotton Pickers, California Ramblers, etc., some of whose pre-electric discs are still cherished by collectors. It found its apotheosis around 1927-8 in the work of a small group of virtuosi who took an occasional but more conventional part in Whiteman's and other commercial orchestras but who found themselves and hot jazz only when they were heard alone or in combinations formed within their own circle—usually for recording purposes only. The leading spirit was perhaps Red Nichols, a trumpeter of remarkably pure and refined tone, but most significant for his grasp of rhythmical subtleties and originalities. Members of his Five Pennies or of other bands under their own names were the trombonists Miff Mole and Jack Teagarden, Joe Venuti (the Szigeti of jazz fiddlers), Ed Lang (the Segovia), Jimmie Dorsey, Frankie Trumbauer, and Adrian Rollini (saxophone and clarinet), Vic Berton (who first glimpsed the jazz possibilities of automatically tuned timpani), Phil Napoleon (trumpet), Arthur Schutt (piano), and a few others. Hoagy Carmichael (vocalist and composer of *Star Dust* and *Washboard Blues*) should probably be included. One of the most unusual was Bix Biederbecke, now dead, whose trumpet and piano playing exhibited an odd and truly distinctive talent. (Hear, for example, his solo *In a Mist*, with the playing of Earl Hines and Garland Wilson the best jazz exploitation of the intractable piano.) It is perhaps significant to note that hot jazz felt but slightly the Jewish influence so predominate in more polite jazz.

I still treasure several albums of records (many of them now out of print) enshrining the activities of these maestri at the peak of their powers. The first to attract my attention was the Charleston Chasers' disc of *Some Day Sweetheart* and *After You've Gone*, issued about the same time as the first Ellington records, but revealing a radically different musical technique. It is displayed most characteristically in the very early Five Pennies records for Brunswick of which the best is perhaps the coupling of *Back Beats* and *Bugle Call Rag*, the Arkansas Travelers' *Washboard Blues* and *Sensation for Harmony*, the Okeh discs of Venuti and Lang in duet or with Trumbauer and others, the Victor *Harlem Twist*, and the Chicago Loopers' magnificent Perfect disc of *Three Blind Mice*. In contrast to Ellington's flowing style and melodic emphasis, the playing here is crisp, detached, predominatingly rhythmical, betraying a not too distant kinship with the idiom of the younger French school. The texture is thin and transparent; the phrases short-breathed. Whereas Ellington unified his men, the Pennies individualized them. A wood block or cymbal plays solo for several measures; the Harmony disc of *Washboard Blues* ends astoundingly on a single vocalized note. With the exception of this and the wa-wa chorus in *Harlem Twist* there is no use of the human voice.

The white school of hot jazz enjoyed a less sensational success than that of Whitemanic jazz, but one equally brief. It faded out as quickly as it had flared up. Conventional vocal choruses were introduced. The virtuosi subsided into conven-



tionality as their groups were broken up and assimilated into commercial bands. A recent attempt to revive the original Five Pennies revealed a falling away from rather than an advance on their brilliance of a few years before. Today the tradition is carried on to some extent in the fleetly paced performances of the Casa Loma Orchestra, but its influence still lives potently in what might be called the neo-hot jazz school, again reverted to almost exclusive Negroid exposition.

Embracing many of the refinements and the skill for organization of the whites, the new black school has left Oliver, Williams, Morton, and to a less extent Henderson far behind. It is now led by Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Don Redman, Chick Webb, Cab Calloway, Garland Wilson, and others, striking out constantly on new ground. (Ellington, a musically more important figure than any of these, must be considered apart, for his wholly original style cannot be confined within either the hot or straight jazz categories.) In Europe the first authentic group of jazz musicians is breeding under the direct influence of the hot jazzists' imported recordings. Spike Hughes in England is perhaps the leading figure, but if M. Goffin is to be believed we shall soon have much to hear from such men on the Continent as Gus Deloof, Eugène Sédric, and Lud Gluskin.

#### IV

Hot jazz, as is pointed out in great detail in *Aux Frontières du Jazz*, differs from the straight variety in its complete freedom from the shackles of notation, its emphasis on polyphony rather than homophony, on rhythm rather than melody or harmony. Always excepting the work of Duke Ellington, the interpreter has gained complete ascendancy over the composer. Performances are unfixed and vary widely from day to day, from one recording to another, depending always on the make-up of the band, the assignment of choruses to soloists, and the momentary mood of the players. In all this, of course, it is only a reversion to the original ideals of jazz, seduced into exact notation and polished interpretation by Gershwin and bands of the Whiteman type.

Hot jazz lends itself none too well to dancing with the arms and legs,—it is fundamentally a dance of the spirit. It verges on Rabelaisian obscenity and outrages musical decencies. Like the equally hot tamale it is not for all palates. One cannot recommend it as one does the work of Ellington to the attention of all musicians. It is too perverse, too limited in appeal and depth. But if it makes addicts of adolescents it packs a powerful kick for many of maturer sensibilities. And if it can be listened to at all it is only with an orgiastic leaping of the blood.

Were it not for one man the commentator on hot jazz must needs stop here. But there is more to be said, for in the fantastic trumpet rhapsodies, sky-scraping glissandos, and perverted pyrotechnics of a black Eulenspiegel from New Orleans, hot jazz redeems a lively art from decay, foreshadows the more fluent, weightless music of the future. Louis Armstrong, Goffin's "vrai Roi du Jazz," has brought a barbaric glee and humor to music that it has never known before. His insanely virtuosic playing emancipates the trumpet from the limits set by Berlioz, Rimsky, and Strauss. His singing—if that untranslatable vocalization can be called singing—is an exuberant outburst at once primitive and subtle, "fluide et surréaliste." As a singing-actor even Chaliapin must take second rank. Hearing Louis, one realizes that Lady Jazz is still articulate, still unregenerate and fecundly expressive.

All seems quiet on the Western Front of jazz, but in the East the prophets of a new era are prostrating themselves before new Messiahs. Their gaudy stars, too, are likely soon to burn out and fall, but even shooting stars and fireworks glow in the memory, twang the stretched strings of the sensibilities. And whatever may be its influence on the next generation of composers, hot jazz has recovered and sharpened that first thrill of the '20's, fired our musical resources and experiences with a new daring and gusto, given us one original and towering personality. One can say as much of few contemporary schools of composition and execution which take too much to heart the appellative "serious."

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[Continued from page 284]

ordinarily reserved for politicians and presidential candidates, but there is surely ample reason for record collectors to indulge in it—in a modest, decorous way, of course.



In the review of the Brunswick records of Beethoven's *Waldstein* Sonata (page 175 of the June, 1932, *Disques*) it was implied that the records were repressings of the old Polydor set issued several years ago. The Brunswick Record Corporation now informs us that these discs are repressings of a new recording of the *Waldstein*, lately made in Germany for Polydor by Wilhelm Kempff.



Dr. Goldberg, who contributes an article on Aaron Copland to this issue, was the first to write a full length article on Copland giving a full view of his work. That article was published some years ago in the *American Mercury*.



The Beethoven Piano Sonata records, played by Arthur Schnabel, have at last arrived, and also the Concertos Nos. 1 and 5, played by the same artist with the London Symphony conducted by Sargent. They were received too late for review in this issue, but will be noticed next month . . . The Brunswick September releases also arrived too late for review in the present issue and will have to be noticed next month. The discs include a Schlusnus record containing Beethoven's *Worship of God in Nature* and Giordani's *Caro Mio Ben*; a selection from Mozart's *Così fan tutte* sung by a new artist, Koloman von Pataky; two Grieg songs, *Ich Liebe Dich* and *Ein Traum*, sung by Karin Branzell; and a Brailowsky piano record containing Debussy's *Toccata in C Sharp Minor* and Chopin's *Waltz in E Minor*.



The first set of the Sibelius Society, recently formed in England by H. M. V., will contain the following compositions: Symphony No. 5 in E Flat Major, Op. 82; *Pohjola's Daughter*, Op. 49; and *Tapiola*, Op. 112. They will all be played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Kajanus. Victor plans to issue the set early in the fall under its own label, but according to the Society plan.



## Music in Mental Hospitals\*

By MARTHA A. KALMS

The systematic utilization of music and allied activities is one of the latest additions to the many forms of care and treatment applied today in the hospitals for the mentally ill. Music's great advantage is its universal appeal.

There are few people, indeed, who are not affected in some way by one or another form of music, be it simple or complex, classical or popular, stirring or soothing, and the same holds true for the mental patient. One of the reasons why he prefers a specific selection is because it brings back memories that are dear to him. He may respond by smiles and laughter or by sighs and tears.

Let us take a few concrete examples. With a group of patients composed of people long past the prime of life the experience of the writer has been that they are happiest when allowed to sing such songs as *Annie Laurie*, *Love's Old Sweet Song*, and *My Old Kentucky Home*. Songs of this type tend to recall the happy past and the act of singing these airs gives the patient a much needed emotional outlet. In fact, a favorite song of the above mentioned group is *Home, Sweet Home*—the singing of which causes havoc in a group composed of younger patients.

Another type of song enjoyed by groups of older patients is the hymn. To get as much active participation as possible from the patients they are asked to select the songs to be sung during the music period and seldom, if ever, a period goes by without the singing of several hymns.

An interesting fact in regard to the singing of hymns is that among groups of men the hymn is a favorite type of song regardless of age, whereas among groups of women patients, hymn singing is confined to groups composed of women past middle age.

In working with a class of acute and convalescent patients of a younger age than the group mentioned above, the music instructor must keep in mind that patients of this type need assistance in regaining their self-control and in building up their self-confidence. Those who are aggressive need to be led to coöperate with the group, those who are listless need to have their energy and emotions aroused, the shy need to have their initiative developed, and the boisterous need a chance to work off their energy. The leader will soon find that these younger patients are, as a rule, highly emotional and that old, familiar songs tend to depress rather than to exhilarate them. *Sweet and Low* and *Love's Old Sweet Song* may in such cases bring forth tears. This probably means that the patient has been carrying a load of pent-up emotions and very often their release proves a godsend to the weeper. However, since in a group the majority must be considered, it is best to use unfamiliar songs which have no associations with past experiences as far as the patient is concerned.

With classes composed of younger patients other activities such as classes in music appreciation and current events in the musical world may be carried on. By

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\* Reprinted, by permission, from *Occupational Therapy and Rehabilitation*, Vol. X, No. 6, December, 1931.

degrees it will be possible to organize a regular four-part chorus. Nothing in education is more valuable for socialization purposes than chorus singing, which means teamwork. The individual must subordinate self for the good of the group, he must exercise self-control, concentration and the will to cooperate. But in every phase of the music work it is important to remember that the patients must take active part in order to derive the utmost benefit. Mere looking on or listening does not require enough of the patient's own ability or initiative and, therefore, does not tend so readily to help him reestablish his self-confidence.

Let us take a few illustrations regarding work with individual patients:

Miss A. is a woman in the early thirties. She spent most of her time in walking restlessly back and forth, wringing her hands and talking to herself continuously. She was resistive when approached for the first time and it took considerable effort before she could be coaxed to the piano. During the first vocal lesson she constantly wandered away from the piano, yet always returned without being called. After several periods she came for the lessons readily and at each succeeding lesson she wandered from the piano less frequently until finally she stayed at the instrument through the entire period. By the end of the ninth lesson she sang *My Laddie* from memory quite creditably. Of course, she had a natural talent for music; she simply needed to be given a start. Singing or taking part in dramatics were the only activities which seemed to have the power of taking this patient out of her isolated dream world and enable her to concentrate on teamwork with her associates.

Miss B., a patient who has lost much of her self-confidence, is a great lover of music. Using this fact as a starting point, she was given voice lessons. She worked faithfully and with each point gained vocally she won a measure of self-confidence. When she began she could not carry a simple folk tune without the vocal support of the group. By diligent effort, Miss B. has reached the point where she can sing a solo against a piano accompaniment. The regularity with which she takes her voice lessons and the disappointment she expresses when a lesson is missed more than tell what the instruction means to her.

Some patients get more from piano lessons than from vocal. Others, who can play well, but who seem to have lost their power of concentration, can be made to concentrate by the playing of duets. The music instructor selects duets which require sight-reading on the part of the patient.

Up to the present time, the writer's experience with individual lessons with male patients has been limited, but the few men that have been given voice lessons seemed to get as much enjoyment from them as the women patients get. It was astonishing how rapidly the men overcame the initial shyness. Both men and women patients, when first asked regarding voice lessons, reply, "I can't sing, I never could sing." Usually the first lesson proves to them they can at least "carry a tune" and the patients always get a thrill as they find themselves improving in range and tone quality. Their enthusiastic comments in the wards have caused other patients to ask the music worker if they might take lessons.

The reader may well ask, "But what is the purpose of all these ward classes and individual music lessons in a hospital for mental and nervous cases?" Specifically, the purpose differs for each group and for each individual. Broadly speaking, however, there are two main ends: first, the educational; secondly, the psycho-therapeutic. Working toward these ends necessitates for each patient a definite program each detail of which is designed to aid, for instance, in developing character, improving group relationship, helping each patient attain his highest point



of social conduct, and giving each, if possible, a broader, deeper and richer experience of life.

For the results obtained much depends on the leader. He must possess a strong, projective personality and an infinite amount of patience, sympathy and understanding. He must be resourceful and, above all, he must be consistent in all his dealings with patients. There is no surer method of gaining the respect and confidence of the group or individuals with whom he is working than by always being consistent in dealing with them.

In organizing an institutional program the music director must be governed by the needs of the individuals or groups in determining what activities shall be included. The writer has found that in a private hospital, where the turnover of patients is rapid and where the groups are necessarily small, the most effective service can be given by leading community songs in each ward at least twice a week; by having chorus rehearsals two evenings each week, the chorus being composed of acute and convalescent cases; and by giving individual vocal and instrumental instruction. In each of the three above mentioned activities much incidental work in music appreciation should be done. As often as conditions warrant the patients should be encouraged to give musical entertainments and to prepare special music for the Sunday services. In addition to the activities named above large state hospitals should organize sight-reading classes, choirs, classes in folk dancing, music appreciation and current events in music.

One of the newest developments of mental hospital treatment is the work done with so called post-encephalitic children, children suffering from the effect of sleeping sickness. The average age when these children are brought to the hospital, on account of their erratic behavior, is from nine to twelve years. When subjected to the medical discipline of the hospital they often improve. An important part of their training is the music which they get in regular school hours. They are taught rote songs, rounds and singing games. The rhythm band is a special feature of their music work. Through their participation in the band the children are trained to listen to music, are given the simple elements of form in music and a chance to exercise a large amount of self-control. Each child wants the drum or the cymbals, the instruments on which the loudest noise can be made, at every lesson. A final part of the music work is free self-expression. The worker plays a rhythmic selection on the piano and after the children have listened to it once they are allowed to express the rhythm in any form of motion they please. Some children work out delightful dance steps and patterns, others merely beat time. The girls enjoy any light, graceful music that suggests fairies to them; the boys always beg for an "Indian War Dance."

At present, only a few of the most progressive hospitals caring for patients afflicted with mental and nervous ills employ a full time music worker. It is to be hoped that in the near future all such hospitals, both private and state, will see the advantage of adding musical therapy to their list of tried therapies. Music is not a remedy for all ills, but, like each of the other therapies, it has justified its right to a definite place in the program of such hospitals as desire to give their patients the advantage of every known and tried form of treatment.

## Recorded Programs

[Such a vast quantity of good music is now available for the phonograph that quite frequently records of more than ordinary merit are overlooked. It will be the purpose of this page to call attention to such records. Readers are invited to send in their suggestions. Records which appeared prior to the appearance of Disques and hence have never been reviewed in these pages will be given preference. All types and makes will be considered, and an effort will be made to avoid the hackneyed and excessively familiar.]

### MOZART

#### Symphony No. 40 in G Minor

Berlin State Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter.

[Three 12-inch discs (C-DX31 to C-DX33). \$2 each]

It is strange that this, the only really satisfactory recording of the Symphony in G Minor, has never been included in the domestic Columbia catalogue, which lacks an electrical version of the work. The G Minor Symphony has not been recorded as frequently as one might have expected, and the versions available—Malcolm Sargent and the Royal Opera Orchestra, Covent Garden (Victor), Stock and the Chicago Symphony (Victor), and Richard Strauss and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra (Brunswick)—all suffer from either mediocre interpretations or mediocre recording. Here both recording and interpretation leave little to be desired.

### RACHMANINOFF

#### Symphony No. 2 in E Minor

Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Nikolai Sokoloff.

[Six 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 11. \$12]

One wonders if this unusual set has received the attention to which its merits amply entitle it? Issued some four years ago, it forms one of the four albums that are devoted to the works of Rachmaninoff. The other three are the Second and Third Piano Concertos and the *Isle of the Dead*. The Second Symphony was composed in Dresden in 1906-07, and its first American performance was on November 26, 1909, by the Philadelphia Orchestra under the composer's direction. It cannot be said that the work is exactly over-played today; and though it is not difficult to think of greater works than the Symphony, it is equally easy to call to mind many far less important compositions that, for no very cogent reasons, are played time after time every season, while Rachmaninoff the composer is represented principally by frequent performances of a certain notorious Prelude of his. The Symphony No. 2, in its original form, required over an hour to perform. Some twelve years ago, at the suggestion of Nikolai Sokoloff, Rachmaninoff revised the score, reducing the playing time to average concert length. The fine sweep and breadth of the first movement, the spirited Scherzo, the expressive Adagio, and the vigor and brilliance of the closing movement are admirable and show the Symphony to be one that records extremely well. There is some delightful writing for the strings, and melody, of which Rachmaninoff is unabashedly fond, has a salient part in the score. The fine performance by the Cleveland Orchestra and the excellent recording—recording which conceals its age uncommonly well—are other factors that go toward making this album a notable one.

### SMETANA

#### The Bartered Bride: Selections

Symphony Orchestra conducted by Elie Cohen.

[Two 12-inch discs (C-50244D and C-50245D). \$1.25 each]

The *Bartered Bride* is known to most of us principally by the spirited little Overture, which has been recorded so many times. But the score is full of charming things, and many of them are included in these two capably played and well recorded discs.



# ORCHESTRA



R. STRAUSS

V-7589

to

V-7593

DON QUIXOTE: *Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character*, Op. 35. Ten sides. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thomas Beecham, with Alfred Wallenstein ('Cello), Michel Piastro (Violin), and René Pollain (Viola). Five 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-144. \$10.

This is a work that has long been in demand and now appears for the first time in an electrical version. Admirers of Strauss who have grown impatient waiting for it should derive some consolation in the reflection that by delaying its release until now Victor is able to present it in an almost faultless manner. Good recording is always desirable, but seldom more so than in such scores as Strauss', where muddy, indistinct reproduction can spoil the entire effect of the complicated orchestration. No one, it is safe to say, can possibly have anything but the highest praise for the superb recording that marks every disc in this set.

Coming a year after the as yet unrecorded *Zarathustra* and two years after the abundantly recorded *Till*, *Don Quixote* was the second of Strauss' comedies, and it has been conjectured that, like *Till*, it was written as "a kind of relaxation after more serious music." Some will wish that Strauss had relaxed more frequently during the course of his extraordinarily busy career, especially during the latter part of it. Strauss, like Cervantes in his book, has added touches of farce to the music, but so skilfully are these touches blended with other elements in the score—poetry and sympathetic understanding, for example—that the work must be ranked as comedy of the highest order, comedy which is essentially tragic rather than buffonery. In the Finale, with Don Quixote on his death-bed, Strauss shows us an idealist stripped of the things that made him ridiculous before, and one thinks of Quixote's simple nobility and generosity rather than of his imbecilities.

Divided into thirteen sections, *Don Quixote* comprises an Introduction, Theme, Ten Variations and a Finale. The score, calling for a large orchestra, includes a wind-machine. In the Introduction we perceive how Quixote's studies of knight-errantry so worked upon his brain that the subject carried him away, and the ten variations deal with various adventures of Quixote and Sancho. Opponents of program music can find much to grow indignant over in *Don Quixote*, but most people will feel inclined to agree with Olin Downes when he says, in his "Symphonic Broadcasts," that "while, if uninformed, we might not really see in the variations the exact incidents they are supposed to depict, we can hardly fail, if our ears and minds are open, to feel tenderness, humor, ironical caricature and pathos in the music."

Sir Thomas Beecham, whose Columbia records have made him well known to record collectors, appears here for the first time on the Victor label, and his début is an altogether impressive one. The set was made while he was in New York last spring directing the Philharmonic-Symphony. It is sufficient praise to say that the interpretation matches Mengelberg's fine version of *Heldenleben*, made with the same band. The soloists are very fine, and the recording maintains the same high standard set in *Gurre-Lieder*.



J. STRAUSS

B-90232

to

B-90236

STRAUSS WALTZES: Album No. 2—(1) *Wine, Women and Song*; (2) *Morning Papers*; (3) *Artist's Life*; (4) *Songs of Love*; (5) *Viennese Bonbons*. Ten sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer, and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alois Melichar.

Five 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 37. \$7.50.

The first Brunswick album of Strauss waltzes, issued in May and reviewed in the May *Disques*, must have enjoyed a well deserved popularity, for now, only a couple of months later, Brunswick is out with a second album of these always delightful pieces. The first album contained mostly familiar numbers; the *Blue Danube*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, *Voices of Spring*, *Roses from the South* and *Emperor* comprised the selections in that set. The new album contains some of the less familiar waltzes, as well as two of the finest that Strauss ever wrote: *Wine, Women and Song* and the indescribably beautiful *Artist's Life*.

An admirable article on Johann Strauss appears in the June issue of the *Chesterian*. The author, William Ritter, apparently knew the composer, and he gives some interesting facts regarding several of the waltzes included in this album. *Morning Papers*, for example, derived its name from the fact that it was written for a journalists' reception. *Viennese Bonbons* was dedicated to Princess Metternich, and it is an example, Mr. Ritter tells us, "of a piece written on a recurrent theme, and there is something so clumsy about the theme and the ceremonious way in which it is treated, that it suggests the following conjecture: perhaps the Princess, in a talkative mood, confided to Strauss that she also had written a waltz, played it for him, or sent it to him later with a box of bonbons, that she had just received from Vienna. Or, maybe she used the words *Wiener Bonbons* to describe the waltz in general, or the works of her guest in particular. In any case, I have the feeling that the central theme was written by the Princess. That would account for the amateurish 'motif' and the delicate, respectful manner in which it was handled. The 'sweet,' thus shown in its dainty paper-frill, has an exquisite, old-world flavour, and it enables us to establish that the waltz, as a musical form, was cyclic much before symphony ever became so—that is, theoretically. For, in practice, it was so, a long time even before 'cyclism' was discovered in France: *Kunstlerleben* (Artist's Life) especially may be studied from this point of view." And the overture to *Wine, Women and Song*, Mr. Ritter says, "evokes all the Rhine legends and Wartburg tales including Tannhäuser. . . ."

In his "Long-Haired Iopas," Mr. Edward Prime-Stevenson has a delightful chapter on Strauss, from which the following is taken: "King of those that possess light hearts, light heads, light heels, Strauss nevertheless must not be thought, what too carelessly he often is thought, as just a composer of remarkably seductive dance-music. His waltzes . . . were indeed written for the ball-rooms of the most terpsichorean public in the world. But these same waltzes are built up on such lovely themes, are filled with phrases *per se* so beautiful, so poetic, so vigorous, elegant, refinedly musical, that the product is constantly symphonic in quality of inspiration. . . . It is hard to find a vulgar measure in any of the Johann Strauss series. . . . One may class Johann Strauss directly and indirectly among great



national musicians; utilizing the people's primitive musical accents, imparting to them polish, finer expression and general perpetuity. This is being the Burns, Wordsworth, Béranger, of melody. Austria's Tyrol, the Wienerwald, Vienna-town are enshrined in many a Strauss waltz, or mazurka or polka. As regards the waltz, Strauss has illustrated strikingly the conviction that though it is something for the dance, it nevertheless seems to be intrinsically, immutably, a thing of melancholy; a dulcet voice of sadness; and that such a product as a really merry waltz, where the themes and rhythms possess any dignity, has not been evolved."



The Strauss waltzes may be the product of a civilization now decaying or altogether dead, but they appeal to the present age no less strongly than they did to the Viennese of some years ago. America may be dry, theoretically, but the fact that it enthusiastically supports three albums of Strauss waltzes may prove something similar to what the recent proceedings in Chicago demonstrated. The performances given the waltzes are deft and competent, and it is pleasant to note that the overture to *Wine, Women and Song*, never before recorded to our knowledge, occupies the first side of the record devoted to that waltz.

Unfortunately, coming to the matter of recording, one must reluctantly call a halt on the stream of superlatives and turn to less imposing adjectives. Mediocre recording was the principal flaw in the previous Brunswick album of Strauss waltzes, and much the same criticism can be applied here. The recording is somewhat better than that in the first album, but it isn't so good as the best modern standards. But the uneven recording in the first album apparently did not prevent it from enjoying a gratifying popularity; fans of three-quarter time evidently are not easily discouraged.

**BEETHOVEN** { **LEONORE Overture No. 1.** Two sides. Amsterdam Concert-  
C-68055D { gebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.  
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

This disc, the only recording of the *Leonore* Overture No. 1 thus far issued, appeared in the imported pressing a month or so ago and was reviewed in the July issue of *Disques*. Though listed as No. 1, it is actually the third of the four overtures Beethoven wrote for his opera, *Fidelio*. What is now known as the *Leonore* No. 2 was written for the original production of the opera in 1805; the great, and perhaps somewhat too familiar, No. 3 was prepared for the revival of the following year; and No. 1, here recorded, followed for a performance (which never took place) in Prague in 1807. The little *Fidelio* Overture (recorded by Blech and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra and also included in Vol. III of the *Columbia History of Music*) was written when Beethoven revised the opera for the last time in 1814. This recording is a well produced one, ranking with the Concertgebouw's finest achievements. The *Leonore* No. 1, though somewhat less imposing than the more popular No. 3, has the same general characteristics that mark the latter.

**BACH** { "AUS DER TIEFE RUF EICH": *Choral Prelude*. Two sides.  
V-7553 { Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.  
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Noticed last month. See also Mr. Hubbard's letter in the Correspondence column.

**CARPENTER**

V-11250

to

V-11252

**SKYSCRAPERS: *A Ballet of Modern American Life*.** Six sides. Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret. Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-130. \$5.

V-L11618

and

V-L11619

**SKYSCRAPERS.** Three sides. Long-playing version. One 12-inch disc: \$3. One 12-inch single-faced disc: \$1.50.

One of the results of Victor's astounding spring recording activities, *Skyscrapers* was issued the latter part of last month, and is now given official release on the regular September supplement. The set was reviewed on page 261 of the August issue of *Disques*. Mr. Carpenter's music contains much that is interesting, and it is admirably played by Shilkret and the Victor Symphony Orchestra. The long-playing version, occupying three 12-inch record sides—just one half as many as are necessary for the standard set,—is recorded as realistically as the standard and can be accounted one of the most successful of Victor's long-playing achievements.

**URBACH**

V-V50042

**THUS SPAKE MEYERBEER: *Fantasy*.** Two sides. Marek Weber and his Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

**KREISLER  
STRAUS**

C-G2683D

**FAIR ROSEMARY.** (Kreisler) One side and  
**THE LAST WALTZ: *Waltz Themes*.** (Oscar Straus) One side. Edith Lorand Orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The Marek Weber disc presents a pretty enigma. According to the label, the composer—arranger is probably meant—is Urbach and the selection, occupying both sides of the disc, is something called *Thus Spake Meyerbeer*. But what one hears, on side one, is a deft performance of Johann Strauss' *Thousand and One Nights Waltz*. Side two is also devoted to a waltz, the name of which is unfamiliar to this reviewer. If you like waltzes, it is recommended that you forget the puzzling label and give your full attention to the engaging music so well played and recorded by Marek Weber and his lively little band. . . . The Kreisler tune is immensely attractive, and it is delightfully—the adjective is really justified—played by the Edith Lorand Orchestra. Not the least pleasing features of the record are the fine performances by the flautist and clarinetist of the orchestra. The Oscar Strauss—incorrectly spelled Strauss on the label—selection is less striking than the Kreisler tune. Both are impeccably recorded.

**HAYDN**

C-LFX205

and

C-LFX206

IMPORTED

**SYMPHONY IN G MAJOR.** Four sides. Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Désiré Defauw. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Perhaps some reader can identify this symphony. We can't. The person who prepared the labels apparently considered his task fulfilled when he informed us that it was a "Symphonie en sol majeur," by J. Haydn, for no further information



is given. We cannot recall ever having heard the work in concert; nor can we find it in the thematic list of 104 authentic Haydn symphonies. So the hoary and vexing question of bad record labelling again comes up to harass and puzzle collectors. Why can't the manufacturers be more careful in this respect? Surely, if they go to the trouble of recording a composition, they ought at least to let us know definitely what composition it is they have recorded; that ought to be the least difficult part of their job. To label a work of Haydn's simply "Symphony in G Major" means very little and offers no clue as to which of his symphonies it is. In the thematic list, there are at least twelve in the key of G major—none of which happens to be the Symphony recorded here.



At any rate, the work given on these records is in four movements—Allegro, Poco Adagio, Menuetto Allegretto and Finale. It contains some attractive moments, but the performance and recording leave something to be desired. The former is only fair, and the latter—all the more surprising, coming from Columbia—is cloudy and lifeless, sounding as if it were done some years ago. It is not a release to be starred.

**SCARLATTI-  
TOMMASINI**

V-S10320

IMPORTED

LE DONNE DI BUOM UMORE: *Suite*. (D. Scarlatti-V. Tommasini) Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugène Goossens. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Vincenzo Tommasini (born in Rome in 1880) achieved widespread popularity in 1917, when he completed his ballet, *The Good-Humored Ladies*. The ballet is based on a comedy of Goldoni and is accompanied by a series of sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757), which Tommasini orchestrated. The ballet was one of the most successful pieces in the repertoire of Serge Diaghilev's Russian Ballet Company. Here a *Suite*, taken from the ballet, is given. It is altogether delightful, felicitously orchestrated and full of charming effects. Goossens and the London Symphony play it with the proper verve, and the recording is abundantly satisfying.

**J. STRAUSS**

C-50332D

MEMORIES OF JOHANN STRAUSS. (Arr. Willoughby) Two sides. J. H. Squire Celeste Octet. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

V-V50039

MEMORIES OF JOHANN STRAUSS. Two sides. (Arr. Henry Weber) Marek Weber and his Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

**TSCHAI-  
KOWSKY**

V-V50041

AT TSCHAIKOWSKY'S FOUNTAIN OF MUSIC. (Arr. Urbach) Two sides. Marek Weber and his Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

These records, all done by small but very capable orchestras, make pleasant releases for the summer months. The Columbia *Memories of Johann Strauss* consists of snatches from *The Blue Danube*, *Acceleration*, *Artists' Life*, *Tales from*



*the Vienna Woods, Wine, Women and Song* and *Morning Papers*. They are well played and recorded . . . The Victor record of the same title, played by Marek Weber and his Orchestra, contains less familiar music, and it is similarly well done, though by a larger orchestra . . . Tschaikowsky wrote some excellent tunes, and many of the best are gathered together in the record called *At Tschaikowsky's Fountain of Music*. There are even sections from the symphonies included on the disc, and they are surprisingly well played. The recording is admirably done.



## CONCERTO

### MOZART

C-68052D

to

C-68054D

CONCERTO IN E FLAT (K. 268). Alfred Dubois (Violin) and Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Désiré Defauw. Five sides and

MINUET. One side. Alfred Dubois (Violin) and F. Goeyens (Piano).

Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 174. \$4.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 718.

Of Mozart's violin concertos, only two have thus far been recorded—the Concerto in A Major (K. 219) and this one in E Flat (K. 268). The latter work was recorded during the early electrical days by Jacques Thibaud—with whom it is a favorite—and an orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. The discs were issued by Victor, but not on the regular lists, so that the set never received a great deal of attention. Those who heard it considered it a good recording for its day, but compared to the highest modern standards the reproduction lacks refinement and smoothness. Thibaud's fiddling is now and then spoiled by the noisy surfaces.

Though it is frequently played and stands high in popular favor, there is some doubt about the authenticity of the Concerto in E Flat. When the work was first published—in 1799, eight years after Mozart's death,—the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, then the leading musical journal in Germany, dismissed it in scathing terms, grouping it with the many collections of spurious songs that were appearing at the time. "Poor Mozart!" the review said, "he has now been compelled, possibly after his death—for we assume it is W. A. Mozart—to write a violin concerto by way of a change. In comparison with many others it is, we admit, not downright bad, but it certainly contains the grossest offences against the most elementary rules of composition . . . offences such as Mozart was never guilty of anywhere even in his very earliest compositions, for example, the symphonies noticed in No. 31 of this journal. Whatever one may think of these one does at least find in them almost without exception pure and correct harmonies such as one would often look for in vain in many recent works of our most famous and popular composers."

An article—from which the above quotation is taken—by C. B. Oldman in the British magazine, *Music & Letters* (April, 1931; Vol. XII, No. 2) goes into the matter at some length and concludes as follows: ". . . I incline personally to the view that the Concerto may have been written not at Vienna in 1784 or 1785,



but at Salzburg or Munich between 1779 and 1781. As a mere guess at what might have happened I would suggest that Mozart while still at Salzburg set to work to provide a rather belated pendant to the five concertos he had already written, perhaps with a view to the publication of the usual set of six, and that he was subsequently forced to lay it aside when he was commissioned to write an opera for Munich. He may nevertheless have taken it to Munich with him, and on becoming acquainted with Eck and being greatly impressed with his powers as a violinist, have completed at least enough of the work to allow of its being given a rough performance. It may even have been Eck himself who subsequently undertook the task of completing it: at any rate it was brought out by the publisher who had already printed several of his own concertos! . . . One word on a more important question. It does not matter greatly if the work was composed in 1779, 1784 or even 1782, but it is important that when it is performed, as it will certainly continue to be, it should be made clear, in the program notes or elsewhere, that Mozart must not be held entirely responsible for it in its present condition. We can then comfortably ascribe all the good bits to Mozart and all the bad to the unfortunate 'unknown.' And if one day a really capable arranger comes along and serves it up afresh as, say, *Mozart arr. Kreisler*, we shall for once say: So much the better."



The happy record collector, with two recordings of the Concerto to choose from, can thus study the work for himself and speculate on how much is Mozart's, how much somebody else's. The faults that marred the earlier set are absent from this new Columbia recording by Alfred Dubois and the Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra. The recording is very well done. And coming after the heavy, turgid measures of such a work as, say, the Bruch Violin Concerto—issued a couple of months ago,—the Concerto given here seems incomparably fresh and light, almost fragile. It is constructed on simple lines; the accompanying orchestra—two oboes, two horns, two bassoons, one flute and strings—is small and unassertive, the violin predominating and soaring aloft in graceful flights. There are three movements—Allegro, Poco Adagio, and Rondo. All of them are charming and filled with dainty tunes.

Alfred Dubois is not so accomplished a violinist as Thibaud, but he is a competent and sincere one, and gives a spirited performance on these records. The Brussels Orchestra gives him satisfactory support, and the excellent recording has already been commented upon.

On the odd side Dubois plays a delightful little Minuet, also by Mozart, accompanied by F. Goeyens.

<b>VIVALDI</b> C-50333D	{	CONCERTO in D Major, Op. 3, No. 9. (Arr. Dandelot.) Two sides. Maurice Maréchal ('Cello) and Jean Doyen (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.
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This record was reviewed from the imported pressings on page 31 of the March, 1931, issue of *Disques*. The Concerto is No. 9 of Op. 3, consisting of twelve concertos for four violins, two violas, 'cello and organ bass. As it is given on this disc, it comprises three movements, a slow one between two fast ones. Maréchal plays it vigorously, with a full, ample tone, and the recording is admirable.

**BACH**

V-7502

to

V-7504

CONCERTO FOR TWO VIOLINS in *D Minor*. Arnold Rosé (Violin), Alma Rosé (Violin) and chamber orchestra. Five sides and

SONATA IN G MINOR: *Adagio*. One side. Arnold Rosé (Violin).

Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-123. \$6.50.

This set, released late last month, now is given regular listing on the Victor September supplement. It was noticed on page 263 of the August issue of *Disques*. The third recording of the work—counting the acoustical set by Kreisler, Zimbalist and a string quartet,—this is easily the best thus far issued. The imported Columbia recording is well recorded, but the performance is no more than fair. Arnold and Alma Rosé, in the solo parts, play with distinction, and a small chamber orchestra provides a competent accompaniment. On the odd side of the set Arnold Rosé renders the *Adagio* from Bach's Sonata in G Minor.

**J. C. BACH**

V-K6423

and

V-K6424

IMPORTED

CONCERTO IN G MAJOR. Mme. Roesgen-Champion (Harp-sichord) with accompaniment for two violins and 'cello.

Two 10-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

Johann Christian Bach hasn't thus far been the source of much material for the recorders, for they have apparently only availed themselves of his Sinfonia in B Flat Major. The delightful recording of the Sinfonia by Mengelberg and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, reviewed in this place last March, was one of the best things Mengelberg did in this country and served to increase the demand for more recordings of this unjustly neglected member of the Bach family. The eleventh son of Johann Sebastian, he was fourteen years old when his father died in 1750. He studied in Berlin and Italy, and in the latter place he absorbed much of the Italian influence. From 1762 until his death in 1782 he lived in London, where he was appointed music-master to the Queen and the Royal Family. He was an admirable harpsichord player and wrote much for the instrument. This Concerto, which has an attractive accompaniment for two violins and a 'cello, is in three movements, all of them brilliant in the extreme. They are charmingly played by Mme. Roesgen-Champion and MM. Bronschwak, Perlemutter and Victor Pascal. The recording is satisfactory.

**PIANO****BACH**

C-68056D

and

C-68057D

PARTITA NO. 2 in *C Minor*. Four sides. Harold Samuel (Piano). Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Harold Samuel of late has not been as active in recording work as one might wish, and so it is to be hoped that the above set is the forerunner of a new series



of recordings from his hand. The few recordings he has made—fairly early H. M. V. records, some of which have been repressed by Victor—have included a good proportion of Bach discs, which is appropriate enough, since Samuel specializes on the music of that composer. With Isolde Menges he has recorded the Sonata No. 3 in E, and by himself he has made the Prelude and Fugue in C Major, that in C Minor, and that in G Major. Other important Bach recordings of his are the Partita in B Flat (two discs) and the English Suite in A Minor (also two discs). Thus the present Columbia recording does not duplicate any of his previous releases; indeed, this appears to be the first time the Partita No. 2 has been put on records, thus making the set doubly welcome.



The term *Partita* is said to have had its origin about the beginning of the seventeenth century when the Kunst- or Stadt-Pfeifers, or town musicians, used the term in connection with the collections of dance tunes which were played consecutively and later taken to form suites. The term, as used by Bach, has two senses: in the Six Partitas for Clavier he uses it as the equivalent for *Suite*; and he also employs the term for three sets of Variations on Chorales for Organ.

The present work is the second of the series of Six Partitas comprising Part I of the *Clavierübung*, published between 1726 and 1731. The Second Partita is made up of the following movements: Sinfonia, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Rondeau and Caprice.

The Partita represents Bach in one of his more joyous and carefree moods, for the work is mostly gay and lively. The Sinfonia, after a slow introduction, gives way to a playful section, and it is followed by an Allemande of moderate rapidity. The Courante is a light-hearted, tripping movement, and the customary adjective used in connection with Sarabandes—stately—may be applied appropriately to the Sarabande of this work. The Rondeau proceeds at a faster pace, and the work closes with a brisk Caprice, in this case a fugue written upon a lively subject. Bach's use of the term *Caprice* here has not the same meaning as it has in his *Capriccio on the Departure of a Beloved Brother*, where *Capriccio* is equivalent to *Fantasia*.

Altogether admirable is Samuel's crisp, well considered interpretation. Equally admirable is the recording, which has the same life-like quality that has been noticeable in other recent Columbia piano recordings—such discs, for example, as Giesecking's recording of the Beethoven Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2, the same artist's version of Debussy's *Suite Bergamasque* and Percy Grainger's Bach album. The two records make notable additions to the list of Bach recordings, and also enrich the piano section of the library of recorded music.

CHASINS  
V-1573

FAIRY TALE. One side and  
THREE PRELUDES: No. 5 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 5; No.  
14 in E Flat Minor, Op. 12, No. 2; No. 13 in G Flat Major,  
Op. 12, No. 1. One side. Abram Chasins (Piano).  
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Abram Chasins is a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, but according to the record label this delightful little disc was recorded in Europe. The *Fairy Tale* is attractive, but the three preludes are more interesting.



The first one given on the record, No. 5, in D Major, is a short, brisk little piece, crisply played and recorded; the second, No. 14, in E Flat Minor, is poetic; and the last one, No. 13, in G Flat Major, is lively. Charming music beautifully played by the composer.



## OPERA

VERDI

C-GQX10563

to

C-GQX10576

IMPORTED

FALSTAFF: *Opera in 3 Acts*. Twenty-eight sides. Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus conducted by Vittore Veneziani and Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Fourteen 12-inch discs in album. \$28.

The reviewer of operatic albums has few light moments. Life for him is at best a pretty serious business. With the exception of the gaiety provided by the Gilbert and Sullivan releases and maybe an occasional album like Rossini's *Barber of Seville* and Johann Strauss' *Fledermaus*, he has been forced to sit—for two and three hours at a stretch—listening to an uninterrupted stream of woe, misfortune, frustration and tragedy. With such gloomy experiences to reflect upon, it is only natural that an album like Verdi's *Falstaff* should cause uncommon rejoicing on the part of the reviewer, as it certainly should among those who can afford to keep up with these bulky and expensive operatic albums. For in many ways *Falstaff* may be set down as the most entertaining and the most worthwhile of all the twenty odd operatic albums that the Italian branch of Columbia has issued.

The product of Verdi's old age—he was in the vicinity of eighty when he wrote it—*Falstaff* remains one of the few genuinely great pieces of comic music we have. The libretto, based on Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, was prepared by Boïto, who had supplied Verdi with a superb libretto for *Otello* sometime before. Boïto's libretto is a capital piece of work, admirably adapted for operatic use as well as preserving much of the flavor of Shakespeare's play. Verdi, when asked for information about the opera from a friend who had heard rumors of the project, replied as follows: "What shall I say For forty years I have wanted to write a comic opera, and for fifty I have known the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. But . . . the usual 'buts' invariably stood in the way of the fulfilling of my desire. At last Boïto has settled all the 'buts' and given me a lyrical comedy libretto that is like no other. I amuse myself setting it to music, without plans of any kind and without even knowing whether I shall ever finish it. I repeat: I amuse myself. Falstaff is a rascal who does all sorts of villainous things, but always in a diverting way. He is a type. There are many other types in the work, which is comic from first to last. Amen!"

Verdi not only amused himself but countless others, as was shown when the work was first performed at Milan, in February, 1893. Musical celebrities from all corners of the world were attracted to the première, and the merits of the opera were immediately appreciated. Not many artists manage to close their life with



a masterpiece, but Verdi is one of the rare exceptions, and the fact that *Falstaff* is a comedy makes it all the more remarkable when one remembers that Verdi's previous work consisted almost entirely of tragedies. The music, with its grace, its supple vigor, its mellow charm, its felicitous and subtle illustration of the text, its refinement, and its expressiveness, reveals that old age in no way impaired Verdi's agile mind nor checked the amazing flow of ideas and melodies which have made his works loved and respected throughout the world. Last month we had Elgar's version of *Falstaff*, but the English composer selected the more complex Falstaff of the historical plays, *Henry IV* and *V*, while Verdi deals with the simpler rogue of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Thus, quite apart from the fact that one is an opera and the other a "Symphonic Study," the two works have little in common.



The excellent cast which Columbia has assembled for this recording is as follows: John Falstaff, Giacomo Rimini; Alice Ford, Pia Tassinari; Nannetta, Ines Alfani Tellini; Quickly, Aurora Buades; Fenton, Robert D'Allessio; Meg-Page, Rita Monticone; Ford, Emilio Ghirardini; Pistola, Salvatore Baccaloni; Doctor Cajus, Emilio Venturino; Bardolfo, Giuseppe Nessi. The Falstaff here, Giacomo Rimini, is thoroughly satisfactory, and some charming moments are provided by the young lovers, Nannetta and Fenton, whose rôles are capably sung by Ines Alfani Tellini and Robert D'Allessio. The former has a lovely soprano voice, and she sings with spirit and intelligence. Of the remainder of the cast, it is sufficient to say that they render their parts adequately. The Scala Chorus and the Milan Symphony are as competent as usual. The whole affair is impeccably recorded.

**LEON-  
CAVALLO  
MASSENET**  
C-2685D

PAGLIACCI: *Pauvre paillasse*. (Leoncavallo) One side and  
WERTHER: *J'aurais sur ma poitrine*. (Massenet) One side.  
Georges Thill (Tenor) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The *Pagliacci* selection, here sung in French, is surely not new to the phonograph. But Thill's admirably restrained interpretation offers a pleasing contrast to the noisy bellowing that most singers indulge in when negotiating this music. Elie Cohen conducts an excellent orchestral accompaniment for this side of the disc. . . . Thill sang in the complete Columbia *Werther* album. Here is a repetition of one of the numbers included in the album. It is well sung, and the accompaniment on this side is directed by Maurice Frigara. The recording in both instances is excellent.

**WEBER**  
C-G9055M

OBERON: *Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster*. Two sides. Lotte  
Lehmann (Soprano) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

This familiar number receives here exceptionally fine treatment from Lotte Lehmann. The lovely quality of her voice and the intelligent use she makes of it lift the record out of the ordinary run of opera discs, and those who have not had the selection spoiled for them by too much repetition will find the disc well worth investigating. A quiet orchestral accompaniment is provided by an orchestra under Kapellmeister Zweig, and the recording is adequate.

—New Issues—

# Columbia Masterworks\*

**MOZART:** CONCERTO IN E FLAT (K.268). Much of the spirit of eternal youth which pervades the writings of Mozart, wonder-child of music, enlivens every moment of this delightful concerto, which was written in the composer's twenty-first year and is one of his happiest inspirations. It is furthermore of notable historical interest as showing Mozart's progress in the development of the concerto form, which remains today much as he left it. Two movements alive with spontaneously sprightly themes are divided by an adagio embodying one of Mozart's most beautiful and gracious airs. The solo part is taken by the eminent Belgian violinist, Alfred Dubois, professor of violin in the Brussels Royal Conservatory.



*Masterworks Set No. 174*

*Mozart: Concerto in E Flat for Violin and Orchestra (K.268). Alfred Dubois and Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra. In Five Parts, on Three Twelve-Inch Records. \$4.50 with Album.*

**BEETHOVEN:** LEONORE OVERTURE NO. 1. The Leonore No. 1 Overture is now issued on records for the first time. It is one of the four famous overtures written by Beethoven for his unique opera Fidelio, and though numbered first, is believed to have been third in actual writing, having been composed for a projected performance of the opera in Prague in 1807. What is now known as the Fidelio Overture was written seven years later. Like its infinitely more famous sister, the Leonore No. 3, this is an impressive and glorious work, having many of the same characteristics, especially in the imposing finale. The record ranks high in the Mengelberg discography, brilliantly and forcefully interpreted, the recording done in the great concert hall in Amsterdam where the Concertgebouw customarily performs.

*Beethoven: Leonore Overture No. 1. Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. In Two Parts, on One Twelve-Inch Record, 68055-D. \$2.00.*

**BACH:** PARTITA NO. 2, IN C MINOR. Columbia adds this month to its already astonishing list of pianoforte celebrities the name of Harold Samuel, world's foremost interpreter of Bach. Mr. Samuel's career is among the most distinguished of all pianists now living and the main facts of his life are well known—his birth in London, student days in the Royal College of Music under Dannreuther and Stanford, where he was later appointed professor of piano, his debut in St. James's Hall at the age of fifteen and his many triumphal tours of America and other parts of the world. He records first one of the charming partitas of Bach—a suite of six miniature pieces comprising an impressive Sinfonia or prelude, a serenely flowing Allemande, a lightly blithesome Courante; the Sarabande (an old Spanish dance form) is impassioned and stately, the Rondeau sparkling and erratic, and the Caprice "enchancing in its wayward humor."

*Bach: Partita No. 2, in C Minor, for Pianoforte. Harold Samuel. In Four Parts, on Two Twelve-Inch Records, 68056-D and 68057-D. \$1.50 Each.*



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# VIOLIN



**RIES**  
**D'AMBROSIO**  
C-50335D

PERPETUUM MOBILE, Op. 34, No. 5. (Ries) One side and  
SERENADE. (D'Ambrosio) One side. Wolfi Schneiderhan  
(Violin) with piano accompaniment by Percy Kahn.  
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

There isn't much here to get excited about. Both pieces lack interest, and their titles sufficiently indicate their character. The violinist, whose name we do not recall having seen before on record labels, is competent, but neither the good performance nor fine recording can prevent the music from being dull.

# VOCAL



**RAVEL**

V-K6396  
and  
V-K6397  
and  
V-L907

IMPORTED

HISTOIRES NATURELLES. Five sides and  
SUR L'HERBE. One side. Elsa Ruhlmann (Soprano) with  
piano accompaniment by Piero Coppola.  
Two 10-inch discs: \$1.25 each. One 12-inch disc: \$1.75.

Anyone who has ever attended the movies must be unpleasantly familiar with that type of movie fan who laughs uproariously at every comedy thrown upon the screen—no matter how dull,—at every action of the comedians, at every situation, no matter how hackneyed and poorly done, believing that since the producers intended it to be funny it must *ipso facto* be immensely funny. When the comedy comes on, he—and just as often she—sits expectantly on the edge of his seat, joyously anticipating every scene with resounding guffaws. The same phenomenon—*i. e.*, that of being tremendously amused at the palpably not amusing—must apply to music lovers also. Otherwise, how can we account for the great amount of clumsy, insipid stuff that is regarded as humorous music? Composers are seldom so boring as when they strive for humor in their music. Humor, to be effective, must be spontaneous and supple. For every piece of successful humorous music, we have an imposing pile of forced, labored, soggy stuff, the only humorous feature of which is that it should be considered humorous.

The present collection of songs is said to have caused a mild scandal when it was first given at the Société Nationale some years ago. It seems inconceivable. The tedious and dull are not commonly associated with the scandalous, and tedious and dull to the point of exasperation the *Histoires Naturelles* most certainly are. The zoölogical field has been pretty well covered by French composers. There are, besides these songs of Ravel, Saint-Saëns' *Carnival des Animaux* and Chabrier's *Les Cigales*. The Saint-Saëns work has been recorded twice, which is twice too much, but the Chabrier songs have not been put on records. Ravel's songs are based on texts by Jules Renard. There are five of them—*Le Grillon* (The Cricket), *Le Martin-Pêcheur* (The Kingfisher), *La Pintade* (The Guinea-fowl), *Le Paon*

## New Victor Releases

### MUSICAL MASTERPIECE SERIES

*Skyscrapers* (John Alden Carpenter). Played by Nathaniel Shilkret and the Victor Symphony Orchestra on three double-faced 12-inch Victor Records Nos. 11250-11252 . . . in automatic sequence Nos. 11253-11255. In Album M-130 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$5.00. Also available on Long-Playing Records Nos. L-11618, list price, \$3.00, and L-11619-S (single-faced), list price, \$1.50.

Here is a modern American composition of such exceptional interest that you really cannot afford to be without it. Brilliantly recorded, admirably interpreted, this ballet of American life is unquestionably one of the most entertaining works produced in recent years.

*Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor* (Bach). Played by Arnold Rosé and Alma Rosé with Chamber Orchestra on Victor Records Nos. 7502-7504 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 7505-7507. In Album M-123 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

This concerto, which has recently been heard on concert programs, is one of the more intimate compositions of the great Johann Sebastian . . . one that has appeal of animated rhythm, lovely melody, and emotional depth. The artists are members of a well-known European quartet. Of special beauty is the second movement.

### RED SEAL RECORDS

*Fairy Tale* and  
*Preludes Nos. 5 D Major, No. 14 E Flat Minor, No. 13 G Flat Major*  
(Chasins). Piano solos by Abram Chasins on Victor Record No. 1573.  
List price, \$1.50.

*The Bitterness of Love* and  
*Anacreons Grab*. Sung with piano accompaniment by John McCormack on Victor Record No. 1568. List price, \$1.50.

*Choral Prelude (Parts 1 and 2) Aus der Tiefe rufe ich* (Bach). Played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on Victor Record 7553. List price, \$2.00.

*Ol' Man River* and  
*Sylvia*. Sung with orchestral accompaniment by John Charles Thomas on Victor Record No. 1571. List price, \$1.50.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.  
Camden, New Jersey

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(The Peacock), *Le Cygne* (The Swan). They are capably sung by Mlle. Ruhlmann, who is admirably supported by Piero Coppola, this time playing the piano instead of directing an orchestra. The recording is satisfactory. There are, of course, many who find this kind of humor and wit highly entertaining, and the set can be recommended to them. . . . *Sur l'Herbe*, on the odd side, is no more interesting than the other songs.



**GOLDBERG  
STOLTZ**

C-G9056M

ICH LIEB' DICH DOCH. (Mann-Goldberg) One side and  
IM PRATER BLÜH'N WIEDER DIE BÄUME. (Stoltz)  
One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor) with orchestra.  
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

These selections suit Mr. Tauber's voice excellently, and he sings them very pleasantly. Both are sentimental Viennese songs, attractive in their way, and the first has a good accompaniment by the accomplished Dajos Bela Orchestra. The accompaniment for the Stoltz number is by an unidentified orchestra led by Ernst Hauke.

**KERN  
SPEAKS**

V-1571

OL' MAN RIVER. (Hammerstein-Kern) One side and  
SYLVIA. (Scollard-Speaks) One side. John Charles Thomas  
(Baritone) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

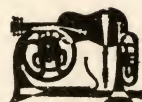
**WOLF  
DUNN**

V-1568

ANACREONS GRAB. (Wolf) One side and  
THE BITTERNESS OF LOVE. (O'Sheel-Dunn) One side.  
John McCormack (Tenor) with piano accompaniment by Ed-  
win Schneider. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

These two discs, issued late last month, were noticed in the August issue of *Disques*. They now appear in the September Victor supplement.

## MISCELLANEOUS



**PURCELL**  
C-DB680

IMPORTED

SUITE IN G MINOR. Two sides. Rudolph Dolmetsch (Harp-  
sichord). One 10-inch disc. \$1.

This is an excellent record. Purcell wrote a number of suites for the harpsichord, and if there are many others as attractive as this one Columbia could perform an admirable service by having Rudolph Dolmetsch record them. The present Suite is in three movements: an Overture, an Air and a Jig. All the movements are lively and give the artist fine opportunity to display his skill. Those who are familiar with the two volumes of the *Columbia History of Music* will recall Rudolph Dolmetsch's delightful records in those albums and so will not need to be told that he plays the harpsichord beautifully. His playing has been perfectly recorded, so that the disc, offering music that is seldom elsewhere encountered, can be unreservedly recommended.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF

## SEPTEMBER

- |       |   |  |   |   |
|-------|---|--|---|---|
| 90237 | { | <p><b>BEETHOVEN</b>—WORSHIP OF GOD IN NATURE<br/>           Baritone Solo in German with Orchestra<br/>           Conducted by Hermann Weigert</p> <p><b>GIORDANI</b>—CARO MIO BEN. Baritone Solo in Italian<br/>           Organ Accompaniment by Franz Rupp<br/> <b>HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS</b></p> | } | <p>Recorded in Europe<br/>           PRICE \$1.50</p> |
| 90238 | { | <p><b>MOZART</b>—COSI FAN TUTTE. Un Aura Amorosa<br/>           Tenor Solo in Italian with Orchestra<br/>           Conducted by Julius Prüwer</p> <p><b>DON GIOVANNI.</b> Il Mio tesoro intanto<br/> <b>KOLOMAN von PATAKY</b></p>  | } | <p>Recorded in Europe<br/>           PRICE \$1.50</p> |
| 85013 | { | <p><b>GRIEG</b>—ICH LIEBE DICH (I Love Thee)<br/>           Contralto Solo in German<br/>           Piano by Manfred Gurlitt</p> <p><b>EIN TRAUM (A Dream)</b><br/> <b>KARIN BRANZELL</b></p>  | } | <p>Recorded in Europe<br/>           PRICE \$1.25</p> |
| 85014 | { | <p><b>DEBUSSY</b>—TOCCATA, C SHARP MINOR Piano Solo</p> <p><b>CHOPIN</b>—WALTZ, E MINOR<br/> <b>ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY</b></p>   | } | <p>Recorded in Europe<br/>           PRICE \$1.25</p> |

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**PURCELL  
ANDERSEN**  
C-2684D

AIR AND HORNPIPE. (Purcell) One side and  
FANTAISIE CARACTERISTIQUE. (Andersen) Edith Pen-  
ville (Flute) and Roland Revell (Piano). One 10-inch disc. 75c.



This is a delightful little record for those who like the flute. The Purcell *Air and Hornpipe* is deftly played, and the *Fantaisie Caracteristique*, on the reverse side, gives the artist abundant opportunity to display her skill, of which she apparently possesses an impressive amount. There is a good piano accompaniment, and the recording is first-rate.

V-1  
to  
V-15

FRANCOPHONE FRENCH COURSE. By Horace S. Chown.  
Fifteen 10-inch discs in metal case with instruction book. \$17.50.

V-16  
to  
V-30

HISPANOPHONE SPANISH COURSE. By Horace S.  
Chown.  
Fifteen 10-inch discs in metal case with instruction book. \$17.50.

Learning foreign languages by means of the phonograph is becoming increasingly popular, and these two reasonably priced sets—one dealing with French, the other with Spanish—should be of great benefit to students. They represent, we are told, the author's thirty years' teaching experience, and no effort has been spared to make them not only easy to understand but also useful and interesting for both adults and children. The phonograph's salient advantage in these language courses is that one may repeat the lessons indefinitely and so overcome the difficulties of acquiring a correct pronunciation much more easily than has formerly been possible. In the French course the lessons were dictated by Mlle. Suzanne Schmitt, Professeur de l' Alliance Française, M. Robert Michelet, specialist in broadcasting, and M. Marcel Pepin, Diplômé de l'École Supérieure de Commerce de Clermond-Ferrand. The course consists of thirty lessons and was adapted to the French language by M. Théophile Antignac, Officier de l'Instruction Publique.

The Spanish course, by the same author and also in thirty lessons, is modelled on the same plan as its companion. The lessons were dictated by Señora Pilar Hernandez de Robres, Señora Laura Bové de Torner, Señor José García Robres, and Señor Luis Torner. "Great care," the instruction book says, "has been taken in selecting the dictators of the lessons for their perfect pronunciation." The Hispanophone was adapted to the Spanish language by José García Robres, Profesor de español. Both sets are well recorded, the voices coming through very clearly, obviously a considerable advantage in such records.



# ANNOUNCING *the*

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# CORRESPONDENCE



## Unrecorded Brahms Chamber Music

Editor, *Disques*:

I am an enthusiastic chamber music violinist, having played during the past twelve years most of the chamber music literature, from sonatas to octets, with numerous amateurs and professionals. I am writing to you because I do not understand why so many of the superlatively fine chamber music compositions of Brahms have not been recorded. For example, the two string sextets, the two string quintets, the three piano quartets, the C minor string quartet, the three trios for piano, violin, and 'cello, the horn trio, and the clarinet trio cannot be heard except by persons able to attend an actual performance of them. I have old recordings of the string sextet, opus 36, the horn trio, and the clarinet trio, but all three of them are entirely inadequate and unsatisfactory.

It is a great shame that these beautiful compositions are not made available, in a satisfactory way, to the many lovers of recorded music. Certainly this should be done during 1933, which is the hundredth anniversary of Brahms' birth. I am writing chiefly to ask if you have any suggestions, or would be willing to cooperate with me in any way to bring about worthy recordings of these masterpieces of chamber music.

HARRISON BOWNE SMITH

Charleston, W. Va.

## We Can't Dispute That!

Editor, *Disques*:

After the generous space allotted my letter of last month I hesitate to take up even another inch. I cannot, however, resist the temptation to call your attention to the breaks in Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*, Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy* and *Poem of Fire*, Carpenter's *Skyscrapers* and Strauss' *Don Quixote*.

No interruption improves any music, but I will be glad if you would note that whenever there is sufficient opportunity to study the score and arrange the necessary breaks we are not exactly clumsy in handling them.

CHARLES O'CONNELL,  
Record and Recording Div.,  
RCA Victor Co., Inc.

Camden, N. J.

## "Aus der Tiefe Rufe ich"

Editor, *Disques*:

Referring to the review of Bach's *Aus der Tiefe* in your August number, the composition as played by the Philadelphia Orchestra is a transcription of an organ prelude to be found in Volume 9 of the Peter's Edition of Bach's organ works, page 54.

Plainfield, N. J.

HENRY R. HUBBARD

## Recording Suggestion

Editor, *Disques*:

I do not know whether or not the following is of any interest to *Disques*. On page 174 of the June number of your magazine, commenting on Debussy's Preludes, is mentioned that *Les Collines d'Anacapri*, "have not to our knowledge been recorded at all." Some years ago I got in Hongkong English Columbia Record No. 4826, a 10-inch black seal record, which contains the above composition on one side and *Brujeres* on the other. Incidentally, I am not fascinated with either. Could you possibly find space in *Disques* to publish an appeal to the recording companies to produce the Trio in D Minor for piano, violin and 'cello by Arensky? I know I have written you sufficiently often about this piece to make you heartily tired of hearing about it. Still, if one digs hard enough at a thing, sometimes something comes of it.

Manila, P. I.

T. I. CHAPMAN

Editor, *Disques*:

There are so many compositions that are issued by two, three and even four companies (*vide*, Debussy's *Fêtes*, etc.) that it is inconceivable that outstanding works, such as the following—with an appeal certainly as great as many other issues considered good "commercial" risks—have not yet been recorded. Possibly, through your columns, one of the recording companies may be encouraged to meet this deficiency. Among others may I quote: (a) Ravel Trio; (b) Haydn *Quinten* Quartet; Bach Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue (Busoni) for piano. Each of these\* is an outstanding example of the genius of the respective composers.

Philadelphia, Pa.

ROBERT A. SCHLESS

\* The first two of these works have been recorded and reviewed in *Disques*.—Ed.

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# NEW MUSIC

SONATA IN E FLAT MAJOR *for Piano*, Op. 3. By L. Oborine. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (Universal Edition)*. \$3.50.

The Sonata is dedicated to the Russian composer N. Miaskovsky and is written in the "grand manner" with plenty of grand climaxes and emotional excitement throughout the three movements. The first movement opens with a slow funereal theme in E-flat minor which rises to a terrific fortissimo climax and whose grief is made still more poignant by the dissonant harmonies accompanying it. The following Allegro themes are skilfully developed throughout the movement and the reappearance of the initial melody in E-flat minor at the end serves to conclude the movement in a spirit of hopelessness and despair. A short intermezzo leads straight to the brilliant finale, which is also interspersed with some lyrical sections and ends in a bravura style. The lyrical character of the themes and their dramatic development make of this Sonata an enjoyable opus for those pianists not scared away by its technical difficulties.

KLAVIERSTÜCK. By Arnold Schönberg. San Francisco: *New Music* (Vol. 5, No. 3). 75c.

Published without opus number, this piano piece seems to have been expressly written for the quarterly *New Music*, published in San Francisco by Henry Cowell and specializing in the introduction of new ultra-modern compositions of American and, occasionally, of foreign composers. Those familiar with Schönberg's musical language will find nothing mystifying in it. There is the same compact manner of writing and close relationship between phrases that distinguish the composer of *Pierrot Lunaire*.

"JOHN BROWN'S SONG": *A Choral Poem*. By Robert Delaney. Boston: *E. C. Schirmer Co.* 75c.

The poem is taken from "John Brown's Body," by Stephen Vincent Benét, and was written, together with the music, by Fellows of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation during their fellowship years. The music is highly colorful harmonically and is written in the form of a dialogue

between a "semi-chorus" and "full chorus" with orchestral or piano accompaniment. It is quite a significant contribution to modern choral literature, and astonishing in view of the age of the composer. (He was born in 1903.)

FIVE MINIATURES *for Piano*, Op. 7. By Paul White. Philadelphia: *Elkan-Vogel Co.* 60c.

Five clever little pieces written in modern vein for children. The titles are: "By the Lake," "A Sentimental Bit," "Caravan Song," "Waltz for Tennie's Doll," "Mosquito Dance." Adults will find them equally amusing, especially the "Waltz for Tennie's Doll" and the "Mosquito Dance."

A SHORT PASSION (*From St. Matthew's Gospel*). By Johann Sebastian Bach. Arranged and edited by W. Gillies Whittaker. New York: *Carl Fischer, Inc. (Oxford University Press)*. \$1.75.

In the preface to this new abbreviated edition of *The Passion According to St. Matthew* the editor gives his reasons for its publication. "A new edition of *The Passion According to St. Matthew*," he says, "may seem to require justification, but the present issue has certain features and objects which, in the opinion of those concerned in its preparation, are not fulfilled by the excellent English editions already in existence . . . The resources it demands are so extensive, and the length of the entire Passion is so great, that only rarely is it heard as Bach wrote it. It can produce its full effect only when given complete, but since we can hear it thus on rare occasions, it is just that an effort should be made to present it in part in a way worthy of the whole. The fault of the usual shortened presentation is that the narrative recitatives, which must in large measure be preserved for the sake of the Scriptural story, outweigh the set numbers, and bring about an ill-contrived and disturbing proportion. Moreover, many small choirs with limited financial and orchestral resources wish to be familiar with the work, and there is a lamentable lack of suitable music of this type for church use in Passion Week. This edition, then, is designed to meet these undoubted needs."

MAURICE B. KATZ

# BOOKS

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF THE GREAT MUSICIANS: *Comprising Books One, Two, and Three.* By Percy A. Scholes and Will Earhart. New York: *Carl Fischer, Inc. (Oxford University Press.)* \$2.50.

Mr. Scholes is surely the most tireless musical educator imaginable. He not only attempts to make the history of music familiar to the layman in every conceivable way, but he also contrives to make the subject palatable to readers of almost every age. His books for mature readers are well known, and his *Columbia History of Music*, the third volume of which was noticed in last month's *Disques*, is apparently enjoying a well merited success. The work under review comprises the three volumes on the great musicians that Mr. Scholes and his American collaborator, Will Earhart, have prepared for younger readers. Here the three volumes are bound into one.

Book One, designed for readers of a more tender age than the two subsequent volumes, has chapters on folk music, early English music, Purcell, Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, sonatas and symphonies, Beethoven, the orchestra, Schumann, Chopin, romantic music, Grieg, Elgar and MacDowell. Book Two, intended for readers a little older, deals with Schubert, John Field, Mendelssohn, oratorios, the opera, Wagner, Verdi, Debussy and Sullivan. The last book has chapters on Brahms, Franck, Tchaikowsky, the clavichord, harpsichord and piano, and considerable matter on American and British musicians. These last are treated extremely generously, and indeed, considering the fact that many important modern composers of other countries (one finds nothing about Sibelius, Richard Strauss, Schönberg or Strawinski, to mention a few examples) are completely ignored, the heavy emphasis placed upon American and British musicians seems without sufficient justification. The volume is written in a manner calculated to interest young readers, and it is copiously illustrated.

MENDELSSOHN'S "ELIJAH." By Thomas Armstrong. New York: *Carl Fischer, Inc. (Oxford University Press.)* 75c.

Speaking of *Elijah* in his Introduction, Mr.

Armstrong says: "Its influence upon the not very virile English music of 1869-90 was enormous; even today it retains much of its old popularity among choralists, who appreciate the range of its chorus-work and its fine dramatic qualities, and (what is so important) get keen physical pleasure from their straightforward and singable parts. Audiences are more critical; few would place the work today as a whole beside *Messiah*, the B Minor Mass, or *Israel in Egypt*. Mendelssohn's genius was not an epic force: it was more at home in the concert-hall or the drawing-room than in the Cathedral. Yet *Elijah* remains a classic; and its sincerity, its dramatic force, its fine musicianship are enough to guarantee it a long survival." An excellent analysis of the work, illustrated by musical quotations, follows, and at the end there are notes on the changes the composer made in the score after the first performance and on Mendelssohn's recitative. Those who are curious about *Elijah* will find the volume very useful.

BRAHMS'S ORCHESTRAL WORKS. By E. Markham Lee. New York: *Carl Fischer, Inc. (Oxford University Press.)* 75c.

We will probably hear much of Brahms in the coming months, since the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth occurs next May. It is to be hoped that the centennial will be celebrated in a fitting way by the phonograph companies, which could perform a useful service—and a profitable one—by issuing some of the chamber music that has not yet been recorded or is unsatisfactorily recorded. The little volume by Mr. Lee deals with the orchestral works other than the four symphonies, which are to be considered in a separate volume. The works considered are the Serenades in D and A, the Variations on a Theme of Haydn, the *Academic Festival* and *Tragic Overtures*, and the Violin Concerto. Mr. Lee's descriptions of the works are revealing, and they are illustrated by many musical quotations. The record collector will find the volume helpful in studying the recordings of the Variations on a Theme of Haydn, the *Academic Festival* Overture and the Violin Concerto.





